

REMARKS

Claims 2-23, 29, 31 and 39-45 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 2, 12, 18, 21-23, 44 and 45 are amended and claims 1, 24-28 and 32-38 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because the amendments: (1) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth below; and/or (2) do not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration. More specifically, the above amendments merely rewrite dependent claims into independent form and cancel claims. No new issues are raised. Therefore entry is proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Office Action's indication that claims 29, 39 and 40 are allowed and that claims 2-20, 23, 30, 37, 41, 42, 44 and 45 contain allowable subject matter. Additionally, claims 31 and 43 depend from independent claim 29 and therefore also should be allowed.

By this Amendment, each of dependent claims 2, 12, 18, 44 and 45 is rewritten into independent form. Thus, each of independent claims 2, 12, 18, 44 and 45 defines patentable subject matter.

Each of the dependent claims depends from one of the independent claims and therefore defines patentable subject matter at least for this reason. In addition, each of the dependent claims recites features that further and independently distinguish over the applied references.

Serial No. **09/987,761**
Reply to Office Action of December 23, 2005

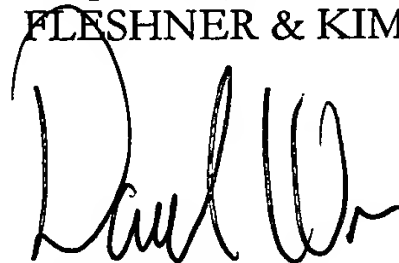
Docket No. **P-0281**

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of claims 2-23, 29, 31 and 39-45 are earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney, **David C. Oren**, at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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